

Governor Carney Signs Three Environmental Bills

Legislation encourages adoption of solar power and electric vehicles, curbing balloon releases

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Friday joined members of the General Assembly and environmental advocates at a Wilmington-based solar array to sign three environmentally focused bills that will help expand the use of renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions, and protect Delaware's fragile ecosystems from the harmful effects of plastic waste.

*"It takes all of us working together to address the existential threat of climate change in our communities," said **Governor John Carney**. "It is my pleasure to finish the great work of Senator Stephanie Hansen, members of the General Assembly and advocates across the state, and sign these important pieces of legislation to protect our state's environment for future generations."*

All three bills signed Friday were sponsored by Senator Stephanie Hansen, who chairs the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.

"These measures – along with the updated Renewable Portfolio Standards signed by the governor in February – mark significant steps forward in Delaware's energy policies and our stewardship of the natural environment," said **Senator Stephanie Hansen**. "None of these bills would have been possible without input from dozens of environmentalists,

community groups, businesses and advocates who were willing to put aside their differences to help forge policies that will lead to a healthier, cleaner and more sustainable Delaware.”

✖ Signed at the site of a [2-megawatt solar array](#) near the confluence of the Brandywine Creek and Christina River owned by Soltage LLC, [Senate Bill 2](#) is designed to accelerate the adoption of community-based photovoltaic systems in Delaware.

The legislation creates a legal framework that will allow residents to enjoy the cost savings and low-carbon footprint of solar power without needing to install photovoltaic panels on their own properties. Instead, neighbors and community groups can receive a credit on their electric bill by subscribing to a centrally located community solar project, which can now be developed under a variety of ownership, management, and contract models.

Delaware law has allowed for community-owned solar generation facilities since 2010, when the shared solar concept was still being tested throughout most of the country. Today, [at least 40 states and the District of Columbia](#) host at least one community solar project with [most located in Maine, Minnesota, New York and Colorado](#).

Under a regulatory process implemented by the Public Service Commission with consumer protections provided by the Delaware Department of Justice, SB 2 requires all community solar projects in Delaware to serve a diverse customer base that includes low-income and middle-class households – an environmental justice component that will ensure solar energy is available to all Delawareans.

“The Public Service Commission looks forward to working with stakeholders on community solar certification requirements and important customer protections which will allow more Delawareans to participate in this exciting, fast growing

market,” said **Matt Hartigan, Director of the Public Service Commission**.

“Senate Bill 2 addresses barriers to community solar development in our state,” said **Drew Slater, Public Advocate**. “This legislation was a collaborative approach with many stakeholders and through forums held by Senator Hansen. It is a testament to everyone’s hard work that this legislation received overwhelming support from the General Assembly and is enacted into law by Governor Carney this afternoon.”

“Soltage is excited to see Senate Bill 2 passed today, as we know first-hand the impact it will have on Delaware’s solar economy and community solar buyers,” said **Soltage CEO and Co-Founder, Jesse Grossman**. “This type of legislation is key for opening up clean energy markets, driving economic growth and job creation in the state, and ultimately, helping the country achieve the decarbonization needed to avoid the worst effects of the climate crisis.”

Governor Carney on Friday also signed [Senate Bill 21](#), an amendment to the Delaware Energy Act that encourages the adoption of electric vehicles by creating a more accessible charging-station infrastructure in the First State. The legislation specifically allows state agencies to charge employees and the public a fee for the use of charging stations on state property so long as those fees do not exceed the agency’s cost.

Finally, Governor Carney signed [Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 24](#), legislation that makes it unlawful to intentionally release balloons filled with air or lighter-than-air gases. Releasing four balloons or fewer is considered littering and a first offense is punishable by a fine of at least \$25. A mass release of five or more balloons carries a civil penalty of \$250 and up to eight hours of community service on first offense.

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